

OUT OF TIME

Issue No. 57

Out of Control--Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners

June 2001

DYKES ON THE STREET !!

3 ex-political prisoners check in with us for lesbian pride 2001



SUSAN ROSENBERG

A friend of mine, a young woman who had come out in prison and who had taken much shit for it from her old friends, from her family, and most aggressively from the cops

had fallen in love with another equally young woman prisoner. They were both about twenty then. One was in for three years, and one for over ten. They had a wonderful time and were such fun to watch, their

energy and their vibes were infectious. But then the woman with the shorter sentence was going out, and the sadness of their parting enveloped them. She went home and the woman who was left was heart broken, bereft, glad that her lover was now free, all of those feelings mixed together. While all this was happening at Danbury a few months after my dear friend Laura Whitehorn got out of prison her partner wrote a column that was in Sojourner. It was a marvelous piece about the love between them and the ups and downs of a free person loving a prisoner (a political prisoner). She talked about the efforts they went through to keep their relationship going, despite the walls and the restrictions and the terrible repression that living on the inside holds within it. She talked about nine years and the much advice she got to give it up. It was a love story and it had a happy ending. It was a story about solidarity and perseverance. It was wonderful. I read it and I wept. I passed it along to my friend who was still in deep grief over the loss of her girlfriend. The next

thing I knew copies had been reproduced and appeared all over. Everyone was reading it. Everyone who had loved inside the walls and risked the retribution were particularly touched, others were too. Only the homophobes completely dismissed it. People talked about it for a long time. Of course it had more meaning to the many who knew and loved Laura from doing time with her.

And the point of all this? Whenever the walls are breached by a letter, by a newspaper, by contact that supports lesbians inside it makes a difference. Lesbians are most isolated and denigrated inside and need solidarity. While everyone follows Linda Evans as she leads the dyke march this June I hope that every single person will do something to work to support lesbians in prison, will work to support the struggle to free political prisoners, and to help stop the expansion of the prison industry that is eating up our country. And by the way OCC has always done this - my deepest thanks.

LAURA WHITEHORN

While I was in prison, gay pride celebrations were very important to me. They gave me a little security in the face of general homophobia - no surprise that it is alive and well and living in the offices of every prison warden in the country. I was in the federal prison in Dublin, California, in the mid-90's. It must have been the third or fourth year of the Dyke March. Linda Evans and I were leaving the dining room one night after the usual slop. The guard stationed at the door to search all exiting prisoners (to make sure we were not purloining any food item) stopped the two of us to tell us, quietly, that she had been at the Dyke March and seen placards displaying our photos and calling for our freedom. That was a very liberating moment. After having been an out lesbian in prisons in Marianna, Florida and

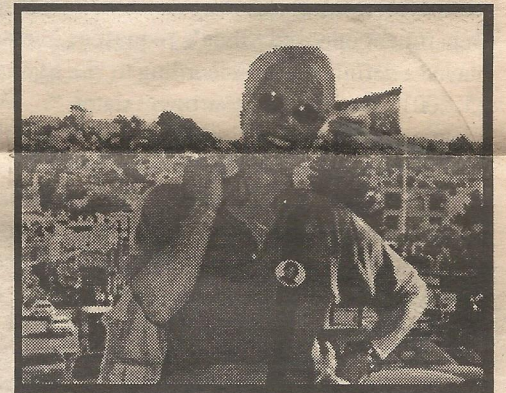
with right-wing fundamentalist guards and religious programs, I felt I'd come home to friendlier country.

But even in those colder spots, I was supported by my queer sisters and brothers. From the moment that Linda Evans and I began to speak publicly from DC Jail as out lesbians, and from the moment in the mid-80's when all of us codefendants in the Resistance Conspiracy Case - including my dear sister Marilyn Buck, who is still in prison in Dublin — began to do AIDS counseling and education and to communicate about AIDS with the gay movement outside the prison walls, we received tremendous support from the queer community.

I was invited to speak at this year's Dyke March, and sadly could not accept because of parole restrictions. Nothing would have given me more joy than to have been able to stand in freedom with my dear dyke sister co-defendants Linda Evans and Susan Rosenberg. I

wish I'd been able to be there to thank everyone for all that support you gave us for all those years. I send

special respect and love to the Bay Area queer community. I think you lead the way in demonstrating that all human rights issues are queer issues - from Palestine to AIDS in Africa to working class struggles to anti-racism to calling for the release of political prisoners. Since solidarity strengthens resistance, I hope the experience of giving us political prisoners that solidarity helps all queers to fight harder.



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LINDA EVANS



This is the first Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual/ Transgender Pride weekend I will celebrate in freedom! I want to thank all of you for the tremendous support that helped me win my freedom after 16 years as a political prisoner. I especially want to thank OOC and LAGAI for their friendship and consistent political and financial support. In the darkest days of prison, we felt your love and knew we weren't alone.

I am especially honored to be a part of the first Dyke March dedicated to women in prison — to remember all the dykes and women prisoners who are locked up and cannot be with us in the streets. They need

your active support, as do the other women political prisoners who we left behind — my sister Marilyn Buck, and the sisters from the Africa Family. On this day of celebration, I hope all of you will remember the 2 million locked up inside U.S. prisons.

Gay Pride Day is a time for celebration but it is also a time for a re-dedication to the goal of liberation for all of us — for all people. It's a time when we can re-dedicate ourselves to winning justice, equality, and freedom, and to creating the kind of world we all want to live in. We can resist being seduced by a world ruled by money, power, and greed, where people are defined by what material possessions they have rather than by what they think or feel. We can resist society's efforts to assimilate us one by one, trying to stop us from standing tall and unified in fighting for an alternative, more meaningful way of life.

In times past, GAY LIBERATION was our rallying cry — a radical vision of the future. Today I'm proud to celebrate that vision of liberation, and to celebrate our wonderful lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. Happy Pride Day!!

OUT OF TIME

UPDATES



Sara Jane Olson *By Diana Block*

Two years after Sara Jane Olson (Kathleen Soliah) was arrested in St. Paul, Minnesota the L.A. police department and district attorneys continue a full scale campaign to lock her up for the rest of her life. Sara Jane was arrested in June 1999 on charges of planting pipe bombs under two L.A. police cars in 1975, allegedly in retaliation for the 1974 police massacre of six members of the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA). In the past year, the powerful Hearst-owned SF Chronicle has openly joined the attack on Sara.

In January 2001, Judge Ideman who had presided over the case in an openly biased manner since Olson's arrest was replaced by Superior Court Judge Larry Fidler. Almost immediately, the DA's office upped the ante against Sara through a media driven campaign to reopen another SLA-related case, a 1975 robbery in Carmichael California in which Myrna Opsahl was killed. Only one person was ever tried in that case, Steven Soliah, Olson's brother, and he was acquitted despite Patty Hearst's testimony against him. In January 2001 the Chronicle, which had recently been taken over by the Hearst corporation, ran a series of articles by Michael Taylor about the Carmichael robbery, implicating Sara Olson as well as former SLA members Bill and Emily Harris, and featuring a sensationalized, distorted account of the SLA's history.

In a recent New York Times interview, Bill Harris explains that the Carmichael campaign is an effort to pressure Sara to turn state's evidence in order to buy her own freedom. However, Harris is confident that Sara will resist because she "has too much integrity... She knows it's not true." Shawn Chapman one of Sara's lawyers who also served on Geronimo Ji Jaga's defense team says that "Olson's prosecution is similarly driven by an old institutional vendetta against groups like the SLA, the Panthers and others perceived to be enemies of the state." (NYT, 5/20/01)

The DA's office has also resorted to legal attacks on Olson's lawyers, Tony Serra and Shawn Chapman. In May the D.A. filed charges against them for disseminating private information on prosecution witnesses. The charges stem from a mistake which the Sara Jane Olson Defense Committee made last November in publishing a motion on their website which included names and addresses of these witnesses. The committee immediately deleted this information when the error was brought to their attention and accepted full responsibility for the mistake.

On a more positive note, the Berkeley City Council passed a resolution in November condemning the use of the conspiracy charge in Sara's case. And Sara, whose trial is scheduled to begin in September, remains optimistic despite everything "I am looking forward to my upcoming trial and a "not guilty" verdict... What comforts me is that so many people see through the campaign and still give a thumbs up, a high five, a hug, a word of support to me and to my family... I have to put my faith in twelve ordinary people. And I will."

Sara Jane Olson and attorney Stuart Hanlon will speak on Friday, June 29, 7:00 pm at the Centro del Pueblo, 474 Valencia St., near 16th St. BART. For info call 415-255-7036 ext. 4.



Eddie Hatcher Gets Life

Eddie Hatcher, a Native American gay activist was sentenced to life without parole in Virginia, last month by a jury that deliberated for only two hours.

Hatcher's mother Thelma Clark and his sister, Giner Ammerman, were permitted to say goodbye before Eddie departed the courthouse. "Never again will we touch him," Ammerman said. (There are no contact visits at central prison.)

Convicted of a murder he maintains he did not commit, Hatcher is known internationally for his seizure of a Robeson County State office in 1988 to protest corruption. Experts for the defense testified that it was impossible for the shots to be fired as theorized by the State. Eddie is physically incapable of firing the weapons in question. Jurors were not taken to the scene, and Eddie's attorneys did not allow him to take the stand as he had wanted to do. Therefore the jury never heard Eddie's story. Eddie will be conducting his own appeal. www.eddiehatcher.org



Leonard Peltier

The FBI has just released thousands of documents to the attorneys on the Timothy McVeigh case. Letters are needed to urge Congress to instruct the FBI to do the same with Leonard's case. 6000 pages of FBI documents are still to be declassified and produced. Notify Congress that they must be released: CALL CONGRESS: 202 124-3121

A lawsuit is pending against the US Parole Commission for unjust denial of parole to Leonard. Jennifer Harbury is pushing Congress and the Senate to investigate the killings on Pine Ridge reservation between 1973-1976.

Coming up: Ward Churchill will speak on Leonard Peltier and the ongoing struggle for American Indian Liberation, June 26, 7:30 p.m., New College Theater, 777 Valencia St., SF.

For more info: Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, PO Box 583, Lawrence KS 66044. Telephone (785) 842-5774, or in San Francisco: (415) 638-8471.

A Bittersweet Victory for Silvia Baraldini

After 19 years in prison (17 years spent in the US federal system and 13 months in a high security unit in Rome), on April 21, 2001, the Roman Tribunale di Sorveglianza granted political prisoner Silvia Baraldini house arrest.

Silvia has been undergoing treatment for breast cancer during the past 7 months and had been moved from Rebibia prison to Gemelli hospital. Because of her medical condition and need for chemotherapy, Silvia applied for a suspension of sentence. Under Italian law, prisoners who have life-threatening illnesses can apply to have their sentences suspended. The US Justice Department opposed Silvia's request and actually played a defining role. According to "La Stampa" (April 25, 2001), the Justice Department states, "... We communicated to the Minister of Justice that the United States considers any release from prison a violation of the signed agreement" (referring to the agreement between the United States and Italy which allowed Silvia to return to Italy in August, 1999). Silvia's request for suspension was denied. Instead she is under house arrest which is to be reviewed September 20th.

The conditions of the temporary court order allow Silvia to leave her apartment only between 9am and 2pm. She must report on a daily basis. She is allowed visitors. It was after a long fight that the Italian court granted Silvia the same rights as other Italian prisoners.

This is Silvia's second bout with cancer. The first followed her incarceration in the infamous Lexington High Security Unit, Lexington, Kentucky, 1987-1988. The summer of 2000, Silvia's mother fell ill and was moved to a nursing home outside Rome. At the beginning of April, Mrs. Baraldini passed away. All of this has been extremely difficult for Silvia. She is strong, though, and a survivor. She has many dear friends and supporters in Italy who are helping her through these times.

It is important for us to show our solidarity and support. You may write Silvia at: baraldini@mcmlink.it Please check out our website for past and present news of Silvia: <http://www.justice-for-silvia.org> Committee to Return Silvia Baraldini to Italy 3543 18th Street #30, San Francisco, CA 94110



OUT OF TIME

LESBIANS HARASSED IN DELAWARE PRISON

Out of Time recently received several complaints from lesbian women prisoners doing time at Baylor Women's Correctional Institute in Delaware. They were lesbians before coming to prison and the level of homophobia directed at them is creating daily problems in how they can do their time. The women say they have not been considered problem inmates and are mostly write-up free, but their stories include denied housing, job, and education opportunities; no response to inquiries to counselors and other officials. The women have been told that because they are lesbians, every friendship they form is suspected of being sexual. This attitude on the part of staff can explode at any moment and these sisters need our support. Following are some excerpts from their letters:

"...Everything seems to revolve around your sexual preference in this institution instead of what is really going on. I have been judged, harassed, and discriminated against by the classification board. Mind you classifications run the prison ..."

"...My every move is being watched because of the assumptions and accusations.....we are not having sex so what could we be doing wrong?..."

"...Same sex orientation is seen as lust...greeting hugs, sitting too close, and body contact is seen as sexual misconduct ..."

"...Their mentality of being in a relationship in prison means having sex or having multiple relationships with other lesbians throughout the prison...in this prison the staff cannot distinguish between friendship and sexual relations..."

"...I am subjecting myself to negative ramifications by writing this letter, but I feel it is very important being a woman, a lesbian, and an African American to express my concerns..."

"...I don't know how this letter would change things, but I know this is not fair how we are being discriminated against and harassed in this prison; especially the ones who are proud of who we are"

Things you can do for these sisters inside: If anyone knows anyone in Delaware, have them contact these women. An attorney making an inquiry would be helpful. Some local lesbian or women's or prison group in the area could also express some concern.

WRITE THESE LESBIANS

LET THEM KNOW YOU SUPPORT THEM !!

Tonya Guinn . Clorese McCray . Adrienne Ponzio . Ishia Watson . 660, Baylor Blvd . New Castle, DE 19720.

LATINA LESBIANS TAKE UP SPACE

Please join us to continue to fill rooms and empower one another....Let's all of us - Latina Lesbians and Bisexual Women - Take Up Space Together and Honor Our Own! Ellas en Accion is an organization dedicated to the political, educational and cultural advancement of Latina lesbians and bisexual women. We are a family of Latinas committed to promoting, celebrating and enhancing our contributions to both the Queer and Latino communities through political advocacy, the arts and educational forums. VoiceMail: 415/292-3261
ELLAS en Accion, c/o The Women's Building, 3543 18th Street, #16, SF, CA 94110, Sandy @ grumpy67@aol.com

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS:

SINISTER WISDOM, the nation's oldest lesbian literary journal, is seeking submissions for a special issue devoted to women loving women in prison. We are looking for material that explores the wide range of experiences of women's same-sex relationships and attraction on the inside. No matter what your sexual orientation (lesbian, bi, straight, two-spirit, queer, questioning) please send us your stories and artwork about women loving women in prison. This issue is open to all current and former prisoners, as well as their lovers, ex-lovers, and other women on the outside. All women, including transgender women, are encouraged to submit material.

Submissions may take the form of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, short stories, articles, artwork, cartoons, photographs, graphics, or any other paper-based medium. Please limit written material to 10 hand-written pages or 8 double-spaced typewritten pages, and feel free to send in multiple pieces in any of the above mediums. You may choose to be published anonymously (without your name listed) or to have your name printed along with your piece. Either way, please be sure to include your name and address on each page that you submit to us so that we do not lose your material. The deadline for submission is: August 31, 2001. Send your submissions to: Sinister Wisdom, Attn: Judy and Beth, P.O. Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703. (510) 665-1935.

CONVICTIONS is an edited volume/anthology of essays, personal narratives, poems, short stories, and letters by people of African descent. It is about freedom and the loss of freedom; about struggle and survival; about women and men behind bars; and women, children and men left behind. Unpublished work is preferred, but previously published work will be considered. Contributors should be prisoners, ex-prisoners and family members. Attorneys and prison staff may submit work for consideration. Some suggested topics include life sentences, the death penalty, being young or old, guard brutality, being LGBT in prison, sexual abuse, and other original/provocative pieces of interest.

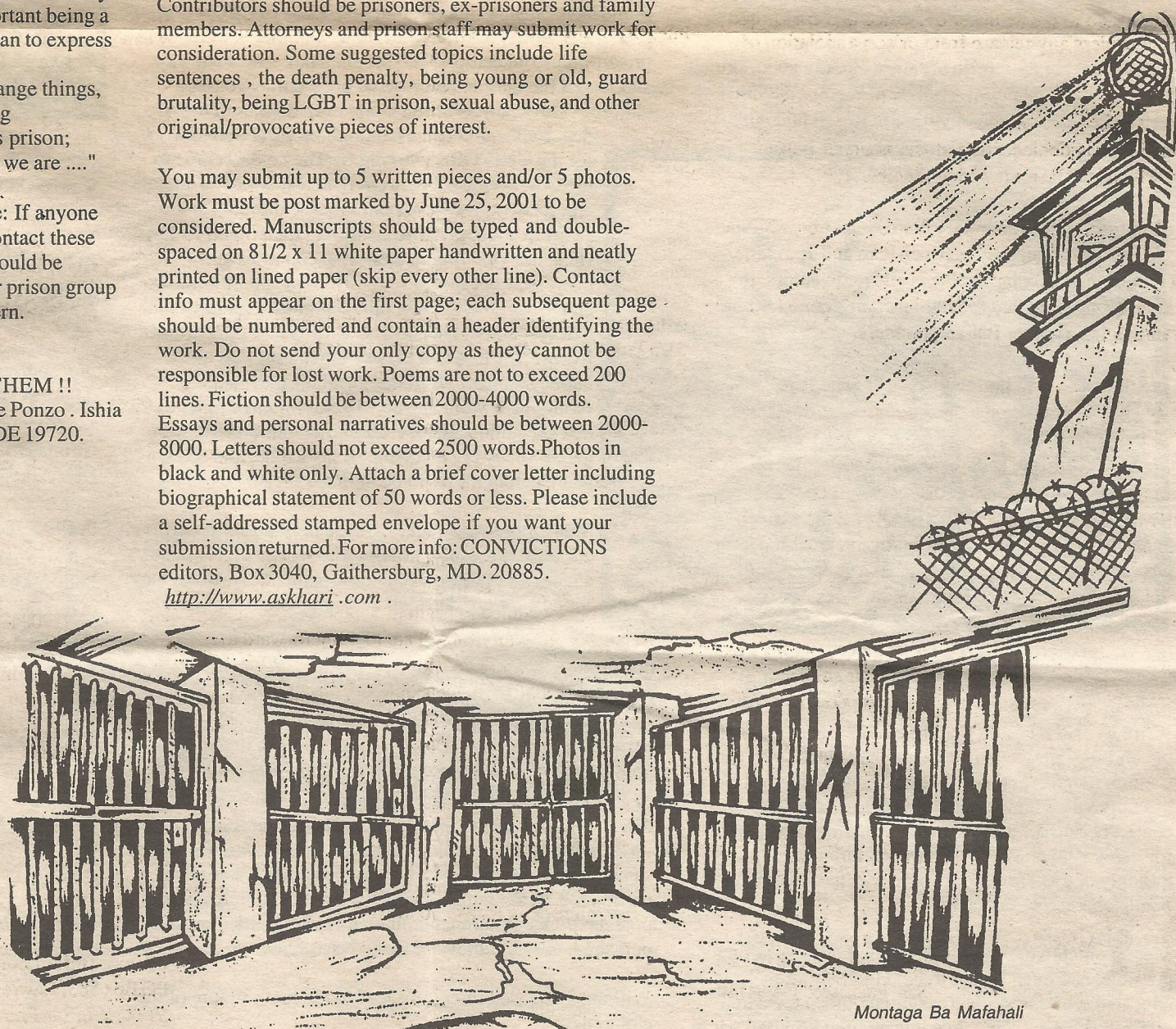
You may submit up to 5 written pieces and/or 5 photos. Work must be post marked by June 25, 2001 to be considered. Manuscripts should be typed and double-spaced on 8 1/2 x 11 white paper handwritten and neatly printed on lined paper (skip every other line). Contact info must appear on the first page; each subsequent page should be numbered and contain a header identifying the work. Do not send your only copy as they cannot be responsible for lost work. Poems are not to exceed 200 lines. Fiction should be between 2000-4000 words. Essays and personal narratives should be between 2000-8000. Letters should not exceed 2500 words. Photos in black and white only. Attach a brief cover letter including biographical statement of 50 words or less. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want your submission returned. For more info: CONVICTIONS editors, Box 3040, Gaithersburg, MD. 20885.
<http://www.askhari.com>

SOA 26 SENTENCED TO PRISON! Resistance Continues as Sentences Come Down

The U.S. Army's School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, is a training ground for the armies of Latin American dictatorships. It has been condemned by activists around the country for training officers in torture and counterinsurgency techniques. The movement to close it down continues to grow. On May 24, 26 activists were found guilty of criminal trespassing by the Federal District Court in Columbus, Georgia. Their sentences range from three years on probation to one year in federal prison.

Even as the 26 were being sentenced, 11 more people engaged in nonviolent civil resistance actions on the base and were arrested. Three people walked onto the base and removed the white line at the entrance to Fort Benning. Five other protesters delivered a letter to Col. Richard Downie, newly installed director of the School of the Americas banning and barring the school for Latin American officers from further counterinsurgency training training.

The SOA 26 includes 13 righteous women, ranging from 19 to 88 years old: Mary Lou Benson, 56, Clare Hanrahan, 52, Martha Hayward, 56, Rachel Louise Hayward, 19, Dorothy M. Hennessey, 88, Gwen Hennessey, 68, Rita Hohenshell, 76, Rebecca Kanner, 43, Elizabeth Anne McKenzie, Lois Putzier, Miriam Spencer, 75, Kathryn Temple, 28, Hazel Tulecke, 77, Mary Alice Vaughan, 68.



Montaga Ba Mafahali

OUT OF TIME

WHOSE SECURITY?

by Marilyn Buck

Also printed in *Prison Legal News*



At FCI Dublin, within a two-week period, two children died. Their mothers are in prison. Both were adolescent boys, 13 and 9. One of the young men ran away from his abusive father's home. He froze to death sleeping in a church bus he'd found for shelter. The other young man committed suicide. I can't tell you why. The bottom line is: these children didn't have their mothers home with them. Criminal "justice" in Amerikkka deemed that society was better off punishing these women. I don't think their children thought so.

These women are far from home. They seldom, if ever, saw their boys, who needed help, support and solace. Such is the situation of Federal prisoners all over the u.s., like state prisoners who are "housed" outside their home states; the same is true for prisoners in Pelican Bay, CA or Attica and Clinton, NY.

Too many children are suffering grievously the loss of one or both parents to the u.s. prison system. We prisoners know that being offenders of the law doesn't make one a bad parent. Many are imprisoned precisely because they were trying to obtain economic stability — and advancement for their families. But imprisonment does create a bad situation for the children — left with relatives, or bounced around in foster care or situations where they are unwanted, resented and abused.

Here, many women work very hard to parent long-distance. For more than a decade, the parent program here at FCI Dublin was excellent, and dynamic; it reinforced those women who were already good, skilled parents prior to their imprisonment by introducing new ideas and tactics to maintain close ties; it encouraged

the streets, on the corners, using alcohol or drugs. They know where that leads. There are already too many mother and daughters here! (And the sons?)

Women are creative in maintaining the connections to their children: craftwork cards and of course the telephone. Some women even call their children every day to help them with their homework. Others call to make sure the children get off to school on time or get home on time. They share the details of their children's lives.

Unfortunately, these attempts at parenting long-distance are being sharply curtailed. The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has decided that all general population Federal prisoners (those in maximum security prisons and units are already seriously cut off) will, as of April, 2001, be allowed only 300 minutes of phone time each month. That may sound like a lot to many who do not have such telephone privileges; yet many state prisoners are at this moment fighting for those privileges! The policy memo states that 300 minutes (the equivalent of 20 15 minute phone calls/month) is "...adequate opportunity for inmates to maintain community ties, in conjunction with visiting and written correspondence." If one calls for less than 15 minutes, then perhaps one might be able to make one call per day. Let's hope that all the children are in one place at one time.

Write letters? We received five envelopes this month. Of course we will be saving money by not using the phone, so we can buy more envelopes and stamps from the commissary! Somehow, in this high-tech world where life can get out of control in a hurry, five envelopes seems somewhat unjust. More punishment for the family and community. Guess they don't have first amendment rights to communicate with us prisoners directly.

Most women are not in prison because they were rich. Some have outside support; others work at UNICOR (Federal Prison Industries, part of the exploited of the prison-industrial complex) so they can pay their own way and lessen the burden on those who are caring for their children. But many women cannot even do that. They are deportable — foreign nationals, not allowed to work for the UNICOR slave wages. They didn't come to the U.S. because they were rich. Most saw economic enterprise as a way to better their children's and families chances in life, as well as their own. The standards of living in their own countries are depressed because u.s. and European corporations and governments have pillaged those economies to extravagantly enhance their profits and standard of living! It's true that these women don't use the phone so much. But they would if they had the funds. I see women who will call for three minutes to just say hello and tell each of their children they are loved. They cry at having so little time, and so many years before they will be reunited.

Many more will be crying soon to be so arbitrarily cut off. So will the children who will feel resentment, anger and perhaps even abandonment. How are they supposed to understand that the prison says mom can't call very often?

To communicate with the world should not be a prohibited, nor a criminal act, but the u.s. government and its BOP certainly act as though it is — "This limitation is needed to maintain the security and good order of Bureau institutions and to protect the public by increasing the Bureau's ability to minimize inmate abuses of the telephone for illegal or disruptive purposes." Strange... Last year the BOP instituted a highly monitored phone system using the very same pretext! Every word is already recorded. Isn't that sufficient? In the name of security, we are being further punished. Our children, families and communities are being punished, too; and they are made less secure.

Will this increased insecurity lead to the loss of more of the children?

More than a Decade Later..... Justice for Judi Bari

11 years after a pipe bomb ripped through Judy Bari, a civil rights trial against the FBI and Oakland Police Department on her behalf will open in October.

On May 24th 1990, a motion triggered bomb exploded while Judy Bari and Darryl Cheney were driving in Oakland organizing for "Redwood Summer," a non-violent direct action aimed at big timber companies. The action was a call for protection of the forests and for protection of the rights of timber workers.. Prior to that night, organizers experienced a barrage of death threats in a climate of hate stirred by big timber industries to vilify environmentalists.

Within minutes of the explosion, the FBI was on the scene of the blast and Judi and Darryl were placed under arrest for transporting the bomb that was intended to kill them. The FBI took advantage of the



blast to catapult Earth First! (the organization Judi was working with) into the national spotlight portrayed as a group of violent, terrorist bombers. The FBI agent in charge of her case was Richard W. Held, known for his involvement in framing and jailing Native American activist Leonard Peltier, and former political prisoner, Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt.

In response to the arrests, a coalition called Alliance for Activist Rights formed to stand up to the assault, and to defend the environmental movement. Ultimately, no charges were filed against Judy and Darryl, and an enormous victory was achieved.

In 1991, Judi Bari and Darryl Cheney filed a civil rights lawsuit against the FBI and the Oakland Police. The case was many years in the preparation, involving thousands of pages of FBI files and testimony. When Judi died tragically in 1997 from breast cancer, the case had not yet been heard.

And now at last Judi Bari's case is set to take place. The October trial will be an important opportunity to call out the FBI for their illegal spying, lying and framing of activists in this country. This is an important moment to finally put the FBI and police on trial. And a forum to demand justice for all political prisoners in the system today!!!

For more info: mecgrassroots.org and www.monitor.net/bari
Call Earth First! (707)468-1660



and taught skills to other women who, for whatever reason had been less motivated parents. But this program has been cut back. The children's center in the visiting room has, this year, been dark most of the time. No children allowed to play with toys, draw, play with their mothers. There are fewer prisoner volunteers who have completed the parenting program to staff the center, because there are fewer programs. A major loss for many who do get to see their children weekly, monthly or even less. One more way to weaken the bonds and active contact.

Most women work hard to keep the bonds as strong as possible, and even harder to help their children grow up educated with the skills to negotiate this increasingly difficult society. They do not want their children out in